

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 08292 091600Z

70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02
/058 W

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R 091452Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4076
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING FOR NEW CENTRIST GROUPING

1. TEN DAYS AGO THE PRESS REPORTED THAT AHARON RUBENSTEIN AND TWO OF HIS SONS, OWNERS OF ISRAEL'S LARGEST PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY WERE UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR VIOLATION OF CURRENCY REGULATIONS AND INCOME TAX EVASION. ON DEC. 8 AMNON RUBENSTEIN, AHARON'S THIRD SON, AND LEADER OF THE SHINUI (CHANGE) POLITICAL MOVEMENT ADMITTED TO BEING A SILENT PARTNER IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS. ALTHOUGH HE CLAIMS THAT HE TOOK NO PART IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FIRM, RUBENSTEIN'S IMAGE AS A REFORMIST AND A VIGOROUS ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADER HAS BEEN TARNISHED. THE REVELATION OF THE INVESTIGATION CAME JUST AS SHINUI WAS FORMALIZING ITS MERGER WITH YIGAEI YADIN'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, IS NOW CALLED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE. YADIN, TOO, HOPES TO CAPITALIZE ON A "MR. CLEAN" IMAGE AND COULD BE HURT BY HIS NEW PARTNER'S REVELATION.

2. MEANWHILE, THERE IS MORE TALK ABOUT A MERGER OF LIBERAL CENTER PARTIES SO AS TO OFFER THE ELECTORATE A SOLID THIRD FORCE BETWEEN THE LABOR ALIGNMENT ON THE
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LEFT AND THE LIKUD ON THE RIGHT. TODAY'S MAARIV CARRIES

A FULL PAGE AD SIGNED BY FIVE HUNDRED ISRAELIS APPEALING
TO ALL THE CENTER PARTIES TO COMBINE FOR THE KNESSET
ELECTION NEXT YEAR. THERE ARE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT
A GROWING SEGMENT OF VOTERS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY
DISENCHANTED WITH THE PROLIFERATION OF PARTIES AND WOULD
FAVOR AN ALTERNATIVE BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR BLOCKS. IT
APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE SUM OF THE VOTES THAT WOULD GO
TO THE INDIVIDUAL SMALL CENTER PARTIES WOULD BE
LESS THAN THE AMOUNT THEY COULD RECEIVE AS A BLOCK.
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Message Attributes

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